



# CONSIDERING MEDICATIONS FOR YOUR CHILD/YOUTH

## WHY MEDICATION?

Medication can be helpful as part of a comprehensive treatment plan that also includes psychotherapy, family therapy, and, if needed, school and community interventions focused on providing necessary supports. When making decisions about medication, it is always important to address the full context of a child's life, including peer and family relationships, and academic and developmental progress. Before making a decision to treat your child with medication, a qualified health care provider should make a thorough assessment of your child and understand his or her needs. Always weigh the risks and benefits of medications.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Is your child/youth willing to take medications?
- Every child is different. What works for one, may not work for another.
- Medication needs may change with time, life changes, biological changes, situational changes. It is **always** appropriate to consult the provider with questions, needs, requests at any time.

## HELPFUL TIPS

- Know that you and your child/youth CAN ask questions
- You and your child/youth are the final decision makers about taking medications, what to take and when to start taking.
- Encourage your child/youth to give their input about medication from beginning to end (including how it may make their bodies feel).
- Be honest with your child/youth about medications
- Don't leave the office without feeling like you have a good understanding of the medications being recommended
- Share all other medications your child/youth takes with the prescriber

Information about medications is frequently updated.

Check these websites:

[www.medlineplus.com](http://www.medlineplus.com)

[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

[www.drugs.com](http://www.drugs.com)

## QUESTIONS YOU MAY ASK:

- What are the best individualized medical and non-medical treatments for my child and family? Explore other options within the Children's Behavioral Health Service Array [here](#)
- What kind of medication are you recommending? How will it help?
- What dose are you recommending? How often is it taken?
- What are the risks/benefits of the medications and the other options?
- How much does research support the use of this medication for a child/youth that is my child's age and has similar symptoms?
- What changes in symptoms and behavior can be expected? How long before we see changes?
- What are common side effects of the medication? Are there any potentially harmful side effects? How often do they occur?
- Will my child need to be tested while on the medication? What tests?
- Are there any known interactions between this medication and other medication(s) my child/youth is taking? Over-the-counter medications?
- Are there any activities, foods, or other circumstances my child/youth should avoid while on this medication?
- How often will this medication be monitored to make sure it is at the right dosage, if it is working or not, side effects and by whom?
- How will progress be measured?
- What should I do if my child/youth misses a dose, becomes sick, or stops taking/refuses to take their medication?
- How long will my child/youth need to take the medication? Are there any steps that need to be taken before the medication is stopped?
- Do I need to tell someone at school that my child/youth is taking this medication?
- What should we do if it doesn't seem like the medication is work